

17 January 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, ID/I Special Research Staff

SUBJECT: [REDACTED] Chinese Linguistic Project

25X1A5a1

REFERENCE: Your Memorandum of 7 January 1969, Subject:
Transmittal of Research Proposal from
25X1A5a1 [REDACTED] -- Chinese Linguistic Project

1. The subject of the proposed research project is of some interest to this Office, to the extent that it might offer promise of permitting refinement or updating of available information concerning the numbers and geographic location of speakers of the various Chinese languages and sub-dialects. We as an Office are less interested in the prospect of having a detailed descriptive characterization of each of the languages and dialects -- their phonology and morphology -- although other parts of the Agency (e.g., DDP or OTR) and the military service language schools conceivably would have such an interest.

25X1A5a1 2. With regard to the inadequacy of presently available linguistic maps of China and adjoining areas, we are inclined to feel that the project proposal presents a gloomier view than is justified by the facts. A fair amount of work in ethnolinguistic mapping has, in fact, been done and the admittedly generalized small-scale map in the CIA Map Folio -- intentionally limited to the actual political boundaries of China -- is not fully representative of the extent or detail of available work on this problem. We recognize that the proposed project could provide a potentially useful compilation of basic information on a subject that deserves to be better known, and we hope that [REDACTED] will succeed in finding a sponsor. In terms of available funds and relative priorities, however, we do not feel justified in offering financial support to the undertaking.

25X1A5a1 3. In addition to the existing relevant work summarized in Section III of the proposal, the [REDACTED] researchers might wish to make use of the following items in digging into the geographic distribution aspects of the problem:

a. Isseleniye Kitaya, MNR i Korei (Peoples of China, Mongolian Peoples Republic, and Korea). Moscow. USSR Academy of Sciences. 1959. This map-and-text study was compiled in 1958 in the Institute of Ethnography of the

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Academy of Sciences, with S. I. Bruk as principal compiler-author. An English translation of the text is available as JPRS 3710, dated 16 August 1960. Other studies in this series provide similar treatment of areas adjoining China.

b. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia. New Haven. Human Relations Area Files Press. 1964. This study provides treatment of linguistic areas in portions of South China as well as in Mainland Southeast Asia. Thus, by treating minority language areas that extend across China's boundaries in this sector, it provides some of the cross-border coverage that we "ignored" in the Communist China Map Folio.

4. If a sponsor is found and the project proceeds, it would be hoped that more than 25 copies of the resulting book would be produced. This small quantity hardly seems adequate if the research effort is at all worthwhile.

5. Finally, it would seem that if the research does proceed, some type of mapping would need to be done by the project team. The proposal makes reference to the fact that the research results would permit marked improvement of existing linguistic maps, but the description of the final product contains no mention of a map. It may be worthwhile, if [REDACTED] is agreeable, for us to volunteer a modest level of cartographic assistance in order to insure that the final product does, in fact, include a map.

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(signed):

JAMES A. BRAMMELL

JAMES A. BRAMMELL

Director

Basic and Geographic Intelligence

Attachment: Final Draft of [REDACTED] Chinese
Linguistic Project sent with
referenced memorandum

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Distribution:

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GD/F/BGI: [REDACTED] :jmc/3057(17 Jan 1969)

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